FREE MAGAZINE

Issue 7, 2012

Tread Lightly and Listen to the Land

THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

Passages from Silverdale, Mission, Abbotsford and beyond.

Something wonderful is happening!

Resistance to thoughtless destruction of nature has given birth to a revolution in our relationship with each other and with our environment. Citizens, weary from futile attempts to persuade politicians that life must come before profit, are banding together to build the kind of world we want to live in. Citizens, tired of waiting for government officials to do the right thing for the next generations, are collaborating with each other to make the right thing happen now. In the shadow of antiquated big box stores and endless fast food drive-thru lines, Farmer's Markets are drawing in record numbers of people searching for a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. University educated young people, knowledgeable in cutting edge agricultural research, are choosing small scale, intensive organic farming methods over destructive industrial farming. Communities are rejecting plans to commandeer our water supply and in countries where this has already occurred, are wrestling control of their water back from private corporations. People, concerned about the health of the Fraser River ecosystem, are blowing the whistle on destructive aquaculture, knowing that our own future is intimately connected to the health of wild salmon. As the failed economic system continues its crash, we are seeing evidence of recovery of local wildlife. We have rediscovered the joy of community, the wisdom of cooperation, and love of the land. Come join the writers of the Footprint Press in forging a path in which all life can thrive.

The future is happening now.

Message from the Editorial Committee

Cover photo: Silverdale Western Screech Owlet, Bruce Klassen

Deadly Farmer's Markets... or the Death of Big Box Stores?

Not long ago, the CEO of Loblaw Companies Ltd. was quoted saying, "Farmer's markets are great. One day they're going to kill somebody though." Loblaw, as most are aware, is the local owner and operator of Extra Foods and the Real Canadian Superstore, among many others across Canada. Mission, of course, is home to a Superstore, and Abbotsford hosts a Superstore as well as an Extra Foods. Abbotsford and Mission also boast their own independent Farmer's Markets since 2005 and 1996, respectively. These two markets offer a wide range of fresh, largely organic products, all from independent vendors, and have been steadily growing since their inception. Having been a regular at the Abbotsford Farmer's Market for each of its 7 years of existence, I can personally attest to how this market transforms the Downtown into a lively and bustling place to be on Saturday mornings.

I have observed these markets morph into much more than places of business. They manage to combine business with community, by functioning as social meeting places in ways that supermarkets and big box stores never have and never will. They are helping to counteract the isolation that may be the single biggest hallmark of this consumer culture – and I'm not surprised that corporate executives would be unhappy at this decidedly 'acorporate' trend.

What I read into the Loblaw CEO's quote isn't that Farmer's Markets are genuinely unsafe or pose any real threat to human health. Rather, I believe that as more and more people realize the tremendous benefits of Farmer's Markets, they are increasingly abandoning the big box store way of life, and opting to get their fruits, vegetables, and other household goods directly from the producer. The big box store and impersonal intermediary conglomerates can see what the Farmer's Markets represent and are reacting accordingly.

I predict that the more popular Farmer's Markets get, the higher their diversity of product offerings will become, and the less we will rely on big-box and chain stores for our shopping needs. Our communities, physical health, and bottom-lines will be better off for it.

Daniel van der Kroon
Eastern Fraser Valley
Lane Creek Watershed

Welcoming native plants into your neighbourhood

Rubus Spectabilis - Rubus (of the raspberry clan), Spectabilis (showy)

Common or Vernacular Name: Salmon Berry

It is not certain how the salmon berry came to its name. References speculate the similarity of the globules of the berry to salmon roe, or perhaps because it was frequently eaten with dried salmon roe by indigenous peoples. Salmon berry was a favorite food of coastal peoples, valued for the sprouts, as well as berries. In early spring, the tender skin was peeled away from the sprouts and munched raw like candy and the emerging reddish shoots steamed as a green vegetable. Fresh ripened berries were eaten with salmon, roe or oolichan grease.

As well as food, salmon berry was valued medicinally for its astringent quality. Salve made of a paste of pounded bark or crushed leaves was applied to festering wounds, burns and aching teeth. Tea brewed from boiled bark was used for relief of labour pain and cleansing wounds and sores. Small tools were carved from the bushy stems and branches.

The salmon berry is displayed on the crest of Mission's Shield of Arms, depicting an important food staple for Sto:lo Peoples. The sprig of salmon berry in the golden canoe shown in the grassy area of the shield, signifies the abundance of agricultural berry crops in Mission's history, (Mission was once referred to as "Home of the Big Red Strawberry").

Numerous migrating birds thrive on the salmon berry bush either for fruit or nectar. The attractive beautiful blossoms offer up their nectar as a feast in celebration of the arrival of Rufus humming birds. Dense, bushy branches provide shelter, nesting opportunities, and a safe haven for small creatures, birds and insects.

The song of the Swainson's Thrush, also known as the 'salmon berry bird' in First Nations' languages, is associated with the ripening period of the berries from May to June.

Showy, rose-coloured, blooms hold the pollen of early blooming salmon berry flowers and also attract a variety of native pollinators. These same beneficial insects will eventually move into our gardens to pollinate our fruits and vegetables.

Although the fruit can be bright orange when fully ripe, bushes in close proximity can produce fruit which ripens a dark purplish-red, just another one of nature's interesting curiosities. The berries are quite sweet but soft and are better eaten when first picked. Salmon berries are one of the most important food sources necessary to replenish hungry black bears emerging from their winter hibernation. Browsing deer forage on salmon berry sprouts and leaves, supplementing their varied diet.

The availability of nourishing nectar of these early blooming salmon berry flowers during those times when food is scarce, is key to the existance and survival of our native pollinators. Their existance is imperative for the production of fruit and vegetables in our farms and gardens. Creating and protecting habitat diversity assures us that the the community of pollinators will be visiting our gardens, providing their beneficial, free service. We all share the bounty and are the recipients of our mutual labours.

Salmon berry is only one of the numerous native species of plants existing in Mission's natural landscape. There is a crucial need to protect these areas from land abuse and harmful development practices which affect all in our shared ecological community.

Phyllis Young, Mission

Salmonberry Jam

6 cups crushed salmonberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 package pectin
9 cups sugar

Sterilize jars and lids in boiling water. Place crushed berries, lemon juice and pectin in 8-qt. pot and stir well. Place over high heat and stir constantly until it reaches boiling point. Add sugar, bring to full rolling boil and boil hard for 4 minutes. Remove from heat and skim foam. Pour into warm jars, clean jar rims and apply lids and screw bands. Process in boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

Artist's Statement

I often find myself casually collecting leaves and flowers to later discover them pressed inside books and magazines. This hobby of gathering natural materials combined with the love of painting and inventing new ways to recreate recycled elements soon blossomed into something amazing. With a true love for all living creatures and a new awareness of birds native to British Columbia, the Bird Series was born. The series features sixteen 5" x 5" mix-media portraits of birds, showing the subtle details of each bird through collaboration of paint on textured leaves. This process was a learning experience for myself and opened doors to the extraordinary variety of birds in my own backyard.

As a nature enthusiast, vegan, environmental advocate and animal lover, I strive for new ways to express my creativity by means of recycled materials. Creating art is a way of natural expression but I also believe it to be something much greater. It is a journey of discovery as I am constantly learning about our natural environment and using that as my bedrock for creativity.

Chrissy Courtney
UFV

Hope for a better future: The Golden Ears Transition Initiative

We are constantly bombarded with information. Some makes us feel good, some does not, and it's easy to become overwhelmed with everything happening in the world; Climate Change, mass starvation, financial calamity, war, pestilence, higher gas prices, the end of civilization as we know it. I think you get the picture.

Most of us are so busy just living our lives that we push these bigger picture problems to the back of our minds. To look at them would be overwhelming. Some will even deny there really is a problem. The reality is that just thinking about the problems is not going to solve them. It is an important first step, but for things to change, we have to take action and create that change.

For me, the process of change began when I heard about a movement that was starting to take hold in communities around the world. It was called the "Transition Town Movement" and grew out of the Permaculture concept, where food is grown in a natural, sustainable manner.

A group of people in England, faced with the global issues I mentioned earlier, applied the permaculture principle to community development. The idea was to create a vision of a future that tackles the issues facing us today and allows us to build resilient communities. Resilience is the ability to withstand what is thrown at you and still remain strong and viable. They realized that if we continued to consume at our present rate, the doom and gloom prophesies would ultimately become the reality. They created an Energy Decent Action Plan based around the idea that one person has no power and change at the national level is too slow and cumbersome. Community is where we, the people, working together, have the greatest potential for change.

In 2009, a group of us in Maple Ridge / Pitt Meadows decided to follow that path and the Golden Ears Transition Initiative was born. GETI is an organization through which all individuals and groups in our community can work together in a coordinated fashion to create a resilient, vibrant, supportive and caring community. This is achieved through local Action Groups that help us meet our needs for food, energy, shelter, sustainable livelihoods and much more, while reducing our carbon footprint and our dependence on fossil fuels.

GETI has grown to almost twenty action groups in just three years. Groups like Cinema Politica, the CEED Centre Society, Farm for life Project, Golden Ears Community

Coop, GETIs Little Red School House, the HUB Cycling Group, The Artistry Local, and many more.

We even hosted a festival in 2011 called GETIFEST. Our first attempt was a huge success and we are now making it a yearly festival. This year, 2012, we are partnering with the Girl Guides and Haney Farmers Market. The festival will be September 22nd at Memorial Peace Park in downtown Maple Ridge.

Change happens over time, but we are already beginning to have a presence in our area. The Transition movement started in one community six years ago. Three years later (when we started) there were about 150 official transition communities around the world. Today, there are over 425, in 34 countries, with another thousand working towards official status. This gives me hope that we can create that better future for all of us. For more information about us, our action groups, and all the things we are doing, you can find us at:
http://goldenearstransitioninitiative.ning.com/

Gerry Pinel
Maple Ridge

Getting to know our local Species at Risk: "Old Frankie"

Standing motionless, silent as statues, or slowing striding in shallow depths of the shorelines of lakes, rivers, estuaries, oceans, ponds, and even ditches, are large, slender, blue-grey feathered birds. These Great Blue herons, described as the most widespread of Canada's herons, appear from British Columbia, across southern Canadian provinces, to most of the Maritimes. They are members of 3 subspecies seen in North America. Two of these subspecies, Ardea herodias fannini, and Ardea herodias herodias Linnaeus, reside in British Columbia. The non-migratory A. herodias fannini Great Blue herons live in the Pacific Coast areas of BC, Washington, and West Alaska, while their A. herodias herodias Linnaeus counterparts, occupy BC's South Okanagan region. Great Blue herons also appear in Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, and some South American countries, though they avoid high mountain elevations, or deserts, in all global areas.

Unfortunately, the Great Blue heron A. herodias fannini, has been deemed as being a species of Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada , (COSEWIC). In BC, they are also Blue-listed as being vulnerable to human activity, a species at risk. The number of Great Blue herons is generally decreasing.

Considered the largest heron in North America, this tall, short-tailed bird, with a height of over 1 metre, weighing between 2.1 and 3.3 kilograms, has a length of 97 to 137 cm. Though the Great Blue heron male is larger than the species' female, both sexes have the same colourful image, from the top of their white heads, down to their "hairy-chested" stomach and chest areas, ending at yellow feet.

The Great Blue heron is a true, and successful fisher of its favourite food, small fish (less than half the size of the bird's length of bill). Sometimes, it will stab larger fish with its sharp beak, and has been known to choke on fish too large to devour. Upon capturing its prey, the catch is swallowed head first into the gullet, and eaten outside of the water. An interesting behavior occurs when 2 foraging herons come near each other. They fully extend their necks, heads lifted over their backs, while wings are partially-opened and body plumes are erect.

In addition to eating its favourite food, other prey include: crayfish, crabs, frogs, salamanders, snakes, smaller birds, large insects, mice and voles. These

food items are swallowed whole, and everything is digested, with the exception of fur, which is spit up in pellet form, similar to that produced by owls.

Flying with what has been described as deep, slow, wing beats, the Great Blue heron pulls the neck back, resting against its shoulders, with its long legs trailing in a straight line. It can be confused with a crane in flight, but that bird flies with a straight neck.

Vocally, the Great Blue heron has a “sharp croak” call, heard mostly during breeding season. At times of disturbance or territorial challenges, it will call out with a “frawnk” sound. This last sound has in some places, dubbed the bird as Old Frankie! Various other sounds are also heard. Courtship “gooo” calls, in-flight “ee” notes, hunting clucks, and homecoming “roh-roh-roh” noises. Snapping beaks, calf-like moos, squawks and chicks’ “tik-tik-tik” calls, have also been heard.

Treed locations, close to freshwater sources, (lakes, wetlands, etc.), is where Great Blue herons, and other heron species, usually breed. The size of these colonies, or heronries, may range in size of between 5 to 500 nests, averaging around 160 nests in each colony.

The courtship process begins in the Spring, when both male and female birds arrive to the nesting areas at about the same time in late February. New mates are chosen each year following elaborate, varied courtship behaviors and displays. Both courting Great Blue heron couples snap together their bill tips, (also used later in defending their territory), or cross their bills, while mated pairs, “chatter”, bill tips together. Male heron suitors court their female choice, by vertically stretching their necks, while sending out loud cries. Then, wasting little time, they breed almost immediately.

Following breeding, Great Blue heron males begin gathering sticks from dead or living trees. Sometimes a unique behavior is displayed by the female bird upon receiving a stick from the male for the nest-building. She receives the sticks, whereupon the male taps his mate’s beak from side to side, then she arranges the sticks in their nest. Generally, the nests are built in trees, 20 to 50 metres from ground level, ensuring relative, but not complete, safety from most predation.

Within a week, the completed home, sometimes snugly-lined with moss, lichens, and evergreen tree needles, is sturdy enough for the egg-laying to proceed. The nest, described as platforms interlaced with dry branches, resembles crows’ nests. However, heron nests are much larger, reaching about a metre in diameter. Often added to in successive years, the same herons or other Great Blues follow part of the 3-R rule, reusing the nests several times. Many heron nests may occupy the same tree, and continuous occupation of some of the colonies can occur over many years.

Within every Great Blue heron nest, from 2 to 6 light blue eggs, are laid in March or April in BC, with clutch-size dependant on whether they live in the South, where they tend to be smaller, or larger in the North. If the nest is abandoned or destroyed, additional eggs may be laid to replace those lost. Incubation follows shortly after the 1st egg is laid, and brooding duties are shared by both parents, the father taking the day shift, while the mother nests at night. After about 26 to 28 days, hatching occurs, and can take several days to complete.

Upon hatching, both parents begin feeding their 50 gram, basically naked chicks, keeping them warm for the first week. Following that, they are less involved, but one parent is always there. During the 3rd and 4th weeks, the rapidly growing nestlings are left alone while their parents both hunt. Following that time, the parents travel further away from the colony, returning occasionally to feed their young, and briefly watch their loud, rowdy brood. By the 10th week, the young Great Blues leave their nests permanently, trailing their parents on their 2 metre wide wingspans, to feeding grounds. There, they learn to hunt for food, and become completely independent, reaching full adulthood by age 2 which is signalled by ornate head, neck, back plumes, and more colours appearing during the breeding season.

Adult Great Blues live from 10 to at least 23 years, but only about 50% of hatchlings reach fledging (leave the nest) age, and of those chicks, only an estimated 20% of them ever reach their first year. Though mature Great Blue herons enjoy relative safety from predators, except for the occasional eagle attack, their eggs and young face great danger from crows, ravens, gulls, birds of prey, raccoons and bears. Other hazards prevail as well, from heavy downpours, cold weather, food scarcity, pesticides, and past hunting tolls, to human disturbance. According to scientists, development should not proceed within a 300m buffer zone from a heronry, with no disturbance within or close to that area from March to August. Such infringements on their areas, including sudden, loud noises, have been known to cause negative reproduction issues, as well as abandonment of nests, young, and entire colonies.

Another critical danger threatens the Great Blue herons. Rapid loss of forests and wetlands is expanding, not only locally, but also globally. This loss is critically affecting herons, and so many other species, some of them being food sources for the large Great Blues. Current estimates place an alarming loss of 85% of Fraser Valley’s wetlands. Locally, these wetlands, deemed essential for 1st year survival of young Great Blue herons, are under critical threat of loss forever. The Silver Creek wetlands in Mission, are directly adjacent to 3 threatened ravines. The forested area, and the nutrients from the water of the ravines’ 3 creeks, is critical for the health, and survival of the wetlands, and its inhabitants. However, a proposed mall on the Northwest corner of Wren Street and the Lougheed Highway would forever change that beautiful habitat. The Stave Lake estuary, and Silvermere Island are two other areas of wetlands offering critical habitat for Great Blue herons. They too, are facing very real threats of proposed development.

Herons, their nests, and eggs are protected in BC under the Wildlife Act, and across Canada federally by the Migratory Birds Convention Act. In addition to this, year round protection has been designated for their nest trees, on private and public properties. Guidelines for the protection of Great Blue herons, their trees, eggs, young, and feeding locations, are in place for property owners of all types of land including private or business enterprises and logging interests.

You can help these vulnerable Great Blue herons, by notifying the closest Ministry of the Environment’s Lands and Parks office if you become aware of a heronry. You can prevent fish loss from your backyard pond, by attaching 1” chicken wire over a metal grid.

In Chilliwack, BC, the Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve occupies a 130 hectare site, (325 acres), on the Vedder River flood plain. This Reserve has over 100 Great Blue heron nests on their site, where many other wildlife species can also be observed. For further information, please visit www.chilliwackblueheron.com.

Val Pack

Mission

Community Supported Agriculture can help support your local economy

When some people hear the acronym CSA they might think of the Canadian Standards Association, and it is true that for a long time, that is all it represented. Now the term CSA can mean something else; it can refer to the concept of a Community Supported Agriculture program. With all the attention in the media about local food, 100-mile-diets and the increasing need to reduce our carbon footprint, it should be apparent that supporting the production of local food is something we need to do. One way to do that is by signing up for a CSA program with a farm in your community or nearby city.

While there is a debate over when and where in the world CSAs first began, the birth of the concept in North America began on two farms (Indian Line Farm and Temple-Wilton Community Farm) in the United States in the late 80's. They arose over concerns about modern chemical farming, the disappearance of farmland and the urbanization of rural populations. Groups of concerned citizens wanted to eat healthy food and know that this food would continue to be produced indefinitely. They worried about farms being bought up by large corporations to produce single crops using many toxic chemicals. These same people got together to form cooperatives which paid farmers up front for organic produce which they would then receive throughout the year. In this way, they were securing a supply of healthy food for themselves, their children and others in their community. The farms and agricultural economy which had been threatened was now safe. The concerned citizens were now happy because they were getting a secure food supply. The farmers were now happy because they were getting a secure income. This is the beauty of the CSA system because it is a win-win situation where both parties are able to benefit.

Supporting a farmer in this way is an important thing to do if you want to increase the chances of farms being successful in the long term. As a small-scale organic farmer producing a variety of food crops, most of my expenses are incurred at the beginning of the year when I have no income from crop sales. That means that each year, we need to either use our savings (if we are lucky enough to have any) or go to the bank and get an interest-bearing loan. Hopefully, by the end of the season, we have paid off the loan and interest and have some money left over to live on. The success of our business is tied to the success of our crops which in turn is tied to the weather and other environmental factors. Some years will be bountiful and others will be sparse. As a farmer, having the community share in this risk, encourages me to continue farming and producing food. This is one way in which CSA programs help to support local food production and prevent the loss of local farmland.

How does this relate to supporting your local economy? There are two things which you must do every day: eat and sleep. Sleeping is free (as long as you have a home) but food costs money and you must therefore choose where you spend your food money.

You can go to the grocery store and buy food but this usually doesn't help keep money in your community. Another option is to go to a local farm and subscribe to their CSA program. Most farms which offer CSA programs are usually small-scale, organic, and practice biological and sustainable growing methods that keep our air and water clean. They also improve the quality of our health with nutritious food that doesn't have to be shipped from thousands of kilometres away. Local production and consumption contributes to the resiliency of our communities by allowing us to be accountable to one another. Knowing our farmers by face and name, meeting them at farmers' markets, and supporting them through a CSA program, is an investment that is returned to the customer each week in the season when they receive a box of fresh, nutritious food, harvested within a day or two of packing, grown in or near your community. Such an intimate, necessary, and life-sustaining activity as eating deserves this careful consideration.

Jeremy Pitchford
Pitchforkorganicfarm.com
Abbotsford

Grave Threat to Wild Salmon!

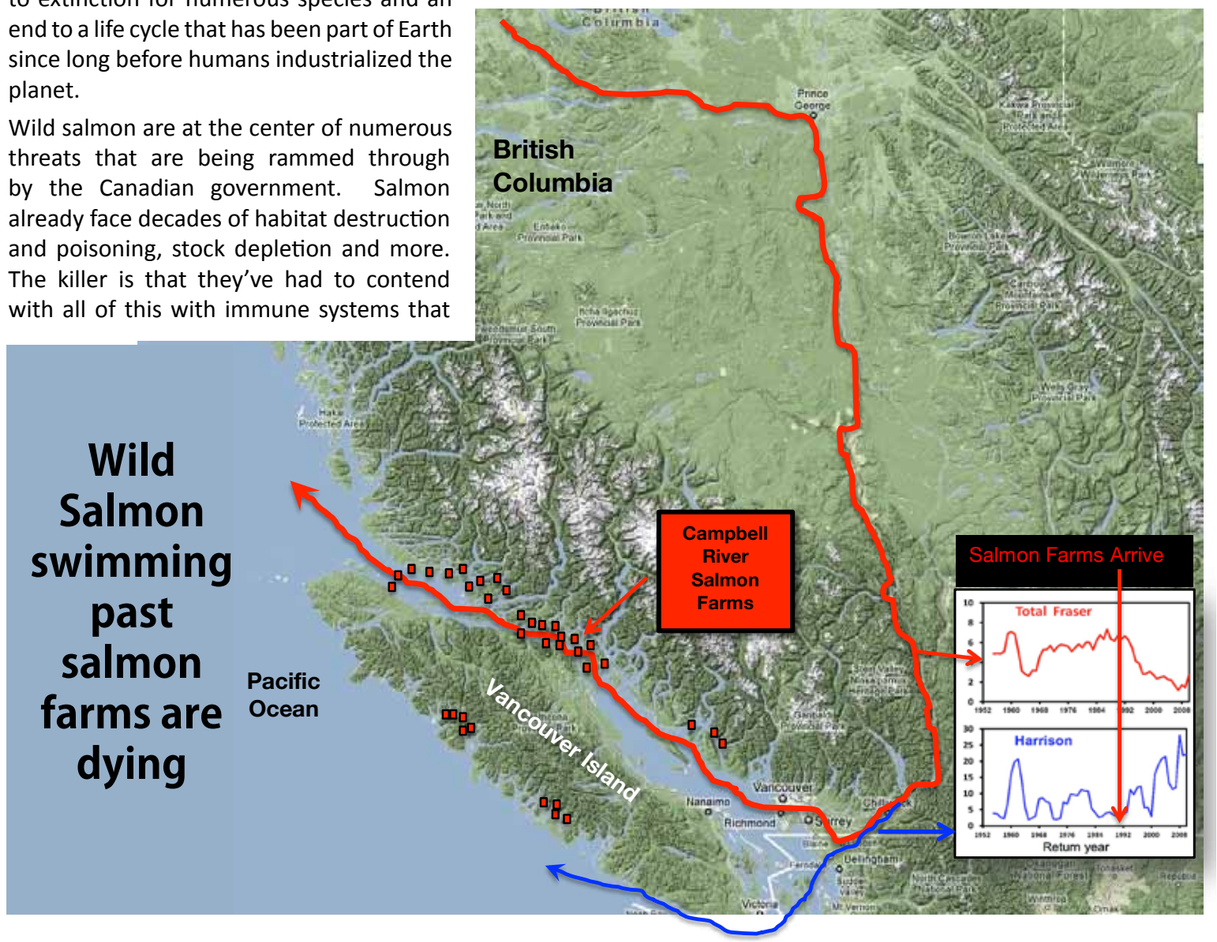
For over 20 years wild salmon have been declining. The famous Fraser River Sockeye salmon run that once boasted tens of millions of salmon, is now threatened with extinction. Along with the decline of wild salmon comes the suffering of over 137 other species that depend on salmon for food, as well as Indigenous Cultural practices that are as intertwined with the salmon as the salmon are with the rivers and oceans.

There is no doubt that at the root of the decline is a detached human society which has been conditioned to consume, develop, exploit and monopolize the very nature of life. The conditioning of this destructive society is in large part driven by a government that looks at life in terms of dollar bills, making decisions on the premise of "How will this benefit the economy?" rather than "How will this benefit the overall wellbeing of life on this planet?" The absurdity of continuing on this trajectory is the cause of much grief to those who see this as a path to extinction for numerous species and an end to a life cycle that has been part of Earth since long before humans industrialized the planet.

Wild salmon are at the center of numerous threats that are being rammed through by the Canadian government. Salmon already face decades of habitat destruction and poisoning, stock depletion and more. The killer is that they've had to contend with all of this with immune systems that are compromised by a series of viruses passed to wild salmon from the open-net salmon farms in the oceans; provided they even survive beyond smolt stage when they are infected with parasite loads from the farmed salmon during the out migration.

Many people along the reaches of the Fraser River don't fully understand the nature of open-net salmon farms (also called feedlots) and how they are impacting the Fraser River salmon runs. "Out of sight, out of mind" tends to be the standard mentality of many, and for that reason the impacts salmon farms have on wild salmon stocks has gone largely unnoticed by those who do not see them in the oceans and understand that the farms are placed right in the migratory paths of wild salmon.

Below is a map citing two salmon runs - the Fraser River salmon and the Harrison salmon. The Harrison salmon, which have been doing well over the years (the blue line), follow a different migration route than the Fraser River sockeye (the red line) which swim through a gauntlet of salmon farms placed smack dab in the middle of the migratory path.



Rather than take this matter with the seriousness it requires, DFO and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have instead remained silent and defensive when pushed for a response. The BC Salmon Farmers Association and others trying to protect the industry, have gone so far as to suggest that it is actually wild salmon that are infecting farmed salmon (a recent outbreak in the farms of infectious hematopoietic necrosis [IHN] forced the culling of over 500,000 farmed salmon) a claim that is akin to an abusive person claiming to be the victim of their own actions.

After much denial that there is an issue of concern, DFO then published on their website that *"Under some circumstances, under the* Health of Animals Act*, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency may need to treat wild fish populations to control* ***fish pathogens that may have been introduced*** *into Canadian waters." (http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/consultations/2012/faq-eng.htm)*

Dialogue with Brenda McCorquodale, Senior Aquaculture Management for DFO, brought few answers. Her response to the query "How can DFO be in charge of protecting wild fish and fish habitat when it is simultaneously promoting the very thing that is killing fish and polluting fish habitat?" was that DFO wears two hats when it comes to wild fish and aquaculture.

It has become quite clear that the government mandate for DFO is primarily to protect whatever potential economic profits come from the production of fish and use of the oceans, not to protect the fish and oceans themselves. That can be the only explanation for the continuation and expansion of aquaculture when aquaculture practices are well known to have a negative impact on wild stocks.

Justice Bruce Cohen who presided over the Inquiry into the Decline of the Fraser River Sockeye salmon is due to make his final report to the Harper government on September 30th.

Please visit www.wildsalmonfirst.org for more info on how you can help protect wild salmon and http://alexandramorton.typepad.com/alexandra_morton/2012/07/ctv-news-farm-salmon-diseased.html for full information on the viruses from farmed salmon.

Elena Edwards

Elena Edwards is an independent activist, writer and campaigner who is dedicated to protecting wild salmon. She attended the Cohen Commission Salmon Inquiry for it's duration to hear and assess first hand what evidence was being brought forth in the decline of the Sockeye salmon. She resides wherever the salmon take her. Visit her website at www.wildsalmonfirst.org.

The Zero Mile Diet: Oysters?? Mushrooms??

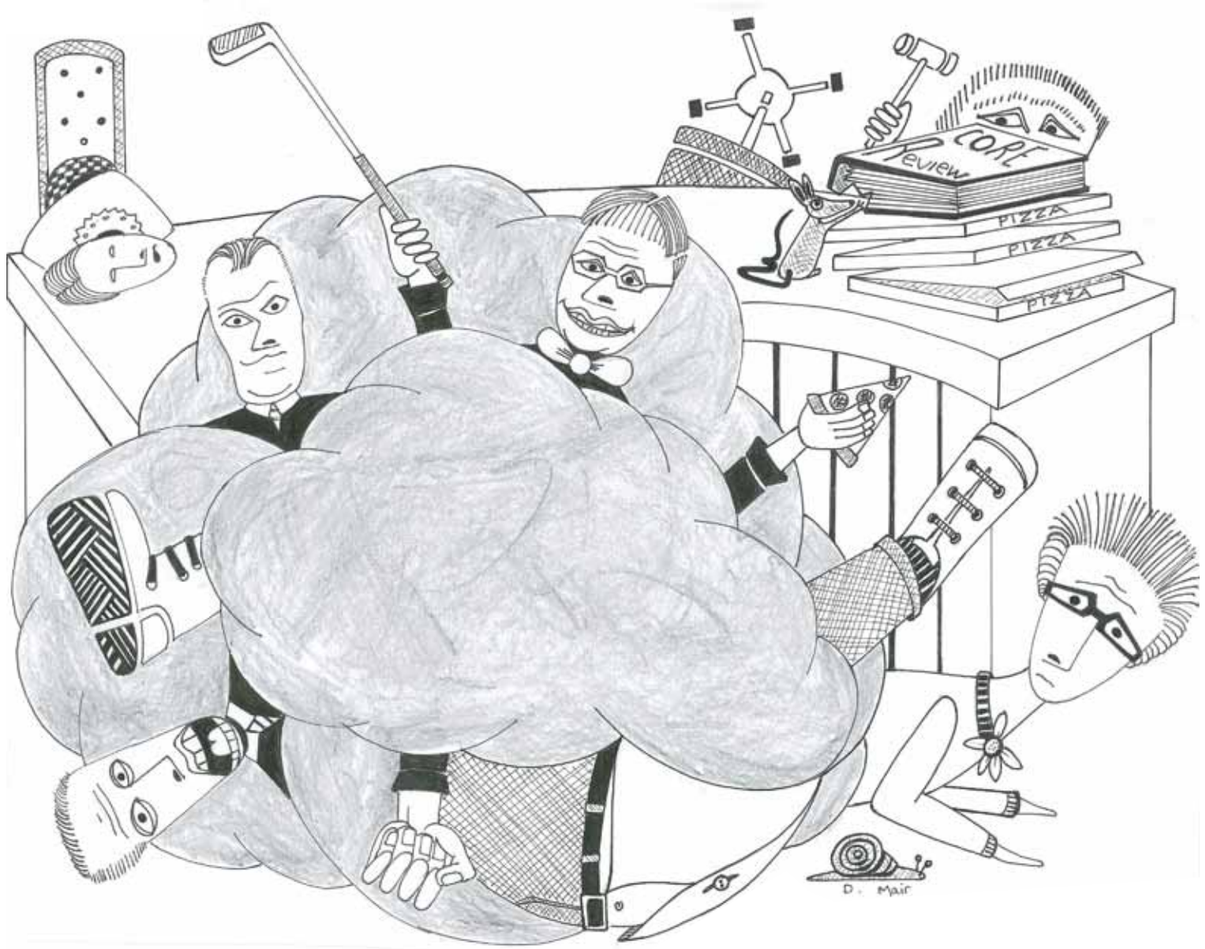
The Oyster Mushroom [Pleurotus Ostreatus] is one of my all time favorite wild edibles. These "shrooms" appear in coastal British Columbia's spring and fall. They grow on dead or dying, standing or fallen, birch and alder trees. They grow on the bark and come in various color shades of pink, ivory and grey to brown. The caps are 2-8" wide and oyster shaped. The flesh is thick and white with a very pleasant mushroom odor. The stalk is not in the center, but offset to one side. The gills are attached and desend to the bottom of the stalk. The only true way to identify a mushroom is by doing a spore print. To get a spore print, place the mushroom in question gill side down on a white piece of paper and leave it in the fridge for a couple of hours. The spore print for the Oyster Mushroom is voilet, but so is the spore print of other mushrooms. Do your research before you go picking. Look on-line, read books, ask someone or go on a field trip with someone "in the know". The Fraser Valley Mushroom Club can be very helpful. The club puts on a show-and-tell "mushroom show" every fall. Watch for dates and times in the local rag.

When picking this or any other mushroom, don't pull them out by the roots. Cut them off at the base of the stem with a sharp knife. Don't pick them all. Always leave every fourth or fifth mushroom so that the spores will seed the log for the next season's growth. This will ensure that the crop is sustainable, unlike mining for gold or drilling for oil, neither of which you can eat anyway. Try to harvest the Oyster Mushroom as fresh as possible because it is highly susceptible to attack by bugs, insects and by a beetle larvae which forms white grubs. Look at the gills on the underside of the mushroom and if it is totally infected, curse yourself for being too late. When collecting unidentified mushrooms, do not mix them together in your basket or cross contamination may occur and you don't want to poison yourself or anyone else. There are also kits available to grow your own mushrooms if you so desire. Stop and look at the beauty all around you while you are picking your mushrooms. A nice leisurely walk in the woods is more rewarding and better for you and your family than shopping for mushrooms at MallMart. Please be aware of private property and be grateful for what Mother Nature has provided. Tread lightly on the land and never leave your garbage behind.

While waiting to use your mushrooms, store them in the fridge on a clean cloth towel, loosely rolled together, or in a paper bag, yes a paper bag, not a plastic one. The Oyster Mushroom earns it's name when dipped in eggwhites and bread crumbs and fried in a little oil for a few minutes until golden brown. Add a little bit of hot sauce and you will be begging for more. Contrary to popular belief, oysters are not an aphrodisiac and neither is the mushroom. It doesn't matter how many you eat, your sex life will not be enhanced. The meaty flesh of the oyster is also great in soups and stews. We dry the Oyster Mushrooms on a wire mesh rack hung above our woodstove. It takes three to four days for them to be thoroughly dry. Make sure they are brittle. If they are still soft they will go moldy. A food dehydrater or an oven on low heat will also work. After drying we put them in glass jars, not plastic, and store them for the winter. We get enough to last us untill the next harvest. When you are ready to use the dried mushrooms, put them in a bowl of cold water to rehydrate them. They are ready to use when they are soft. Call yourself a novice mycologist, and don't forget to teach your kids.

Mike Diener, Mission

Mishi-leaks, D. Mair



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SPRAWL REPORT

While citizens collaborate to celebrate their community's environmental heritage, local municipal governments continue to push an outdated sprawl model of growth. In April 16/12, despite a strong public turnout opposed to the destruction of endangered species' habitat, Mission council voted unanimously to proceed with a 33-acre commercial and residential development at Wren Street. The development will destroy several ravine ecosystems and lies directly adjacent to the highly sensitive Silvercreek wetlands. Council focused only on perceived economic benefits of the development and went so far as to state that environmental impacts were not relevant to their decision. In less than a year into their mandate, Mission council has cancelled its Streamside Protection Bylaw and has weakened its already inadequate Tree protection policy. Meanwhile, in Abbotsford, a proposal to exclude over 300 acres from the Agricultural Land Reserve for a massive industrial development is receiving a similar economic justification despite recent international news predicting a global food crisis. How can squandering your community's environmental capital possibly lead to a sustainable future?

Tracy Lyster
CAUSS

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THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

The Footprint Press is published as a non-profit community newspaper. Articles are submitted by dedicated residents wishing to share their vision of a more sustainable and just society and who seek to live harmoniously with nature. Circulation is 2000+ on recycled paper. A coloured version of the paper can also be viewed on-line at FootprintPress.ca or call us at 604 820-7592. Your support is appreciated and your participation is very welcome. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the publishers as a whole or individually.

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